

p. 243. **Great Indian Hornbill** *Buceros bicornis*. X'mas 1885. Not very uncommon in the forests of the Kolaba District, below Mahableshwar.

p. 249. **Grey Hornbill** *Tockus bicornis*. The beak for rheumatism.

p. 269. **Coppersmith.**

Tokerao = Hammer-king.

Sutar = Carpenter.

p. 271. **Crimsonbreasted Pied Woodpecker** *Picus cathpharius* Hodgson.

From *Kath-phor* = Wood-splitter.

p. 341. **Pied Crested Cuckoo**. The 'Chatak' of Hindu poetry is said to live on drops of rain.

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May 8, 1968.

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10. NOTES ON LITTLE KNOWN LIZARDS FROM THE RAJASTHAN DESERT

Some pioneering work was done on the reptiles of the Rajasthan desert under the leadership of Professor Daya Krishna, during a Project financed by UNESCO. Unfortunately, however, this detailed work has not been published so far. The collections made from 1953 to 1955 during the tenure of the project did not include the lizards which I am reporting in the present communication with the exception of *Eumeces taeniolatus*. The lizards, under report, were collected from the western Rajasthan during the last few years and some of them are being recorded for the first time from this region.

Hemidactylus triedrus (Daudin)

The Blotched Gecko

Gecko triedrus Daudin, 1802. *Hist. Nat. Report*, IV : 155.

1 ♂ (?)—Bhopalgarh, 50 Km north of Bilara, September 1963.

Snout vent length 72 mm, Tail length 70 mm.

The Blotched Gecko was collected at night near a lit petromax in the Institute nursery situated over a gravel mixed sandy plain, near a hillock. The nocturnal lizard was apparently attracted by the swarm-

ing insects around the light. Its stomach revealed three whole beetles, one of which was in a state beyond identification and the two others belonged to *Schizonycha*.

The range of the species extends from Ceylon through much of Peninsular India to the vicinity of Karachi (Minton 1966). From Rajasthan, it has been reported from Ajmer (Smith 1935).

Agama megalonyx Günther

Afghan Ground Agama

Trapelus megalonyx Günther, 1864. The reptiles of British India. London.

1 ♂—Shahgarh, about 100 Km southwest of Ramgarh, September, 1971.

1 ♀—Gadra Road, 60 Km west of Barmer.

Snout vent length ♂ 65 mm, ♀ 70 mm Tail length ♂ 125 mm, ♀ 130 mm.

The specimens were collected on sand dune country having a dominant under-shrub, *Calligonum polygonoides*. The Shahgarh male was found to be active in the morning. Its stomach contained parts of two beetles, and wings and abdomen of a grasshopper. The Gadra Road female was carrying 5 eggs, three on the right and two on the left side. The eggs measured 8 to 10 mm in diameter. Unfortunately the date of collection is not on record.

The species has been reported from Perso-Baluchistan border (Smith 1935), Baluchistan plateau and adjacent Afghanistan (Minton 1966). Murray (1884) reported it from Sind. The present record extends its range further east and the species is being reported for the first time from this desert.

Phrynocephalus euptilopus (?) Alcock & Finn

Vivid-coloured Toad Agama

Phrynocephalus euptilopus Alcock & Finn, 1896. *J. Asiat. Soc., Bengal*, 65 : 556,

1 ♀—Mandla, 100 Km southwest of Ramgarh, September, 1971.

1 ♂ and 10 ♀♀, and 21 subadult, Dhanana, 95 Km southwest of Jaisalmer. September, 1971.

Snout vent length Adult ♂ 66 mm, ♀ 62 mm (range 56-68 mm).

Tail length Adult ♂ 40 mm, ♀ 36.2 mm (range 31-44 mm).

The genus, *Phrynocephalus*, is being reported for the first time from India. I am, however, not very definite about the species of the agamid since the tail length of the Rajasthan material is shorter than the snout vent length. As a matter of fact the tail in all the species included by Smith (1935) under the genus is longer than the snout vent length, except in *P. luteoguttatus* in which both the lengths are equal—an observation confirmed by Minton (1966). The present series also differs from all these species in having comparatively longer body

(Table) and in not having black markings on the tail, and in not having tip of the tail black. I have, however, tentatively placed it under *P. euptilopus* following Minton's (1966) key which mentions that it is the only species which exhibits vivid coloration over the body. In life, the present series showed red, orange, black and white dorsal spots.

TABLE

A COMPARISON OF SNOUT VENT AND TAIL LENGTHS OF VARIOUS SPECIES OF THE GENUS *Phrynocephalus* WITH THOSE OF THE LIZARDS COLLECTED IN RAJASTHAN DESERT

Species	Smith (1935)		% of S v length	Minton (1966)	
	Snout vent length mm	Tail length		Snout vent length mm	% of S v length
<i>P. scutellatus</i>	.. 50	70	140	♂ 42-44 ♀ 46	141-148
<i>P. leuteoguttatus</i>	.. 40	40	equal	♂ 38-44 ♀ 38-41	? ? (equal)
<i>P. ornatus</i>	.. 38	52	136	♂ 35-40 ♀ 40	133-142 119-125
<i>P. maculatus</i>	.. 73	120	160	♂ 79-85	138-152
<i>P. theobaldi</i>	.. 54	58	108	—	—
<i>P. reticulatus</i>	.. 45	60	133	—	—
<i>P. euptilopus</i>	.. 60	65	108	—	—
Rajasthan desert <i>P. euptilopus</i>	(Present study)				
	♂ 66	40	60.6		
	♀ 62 (56-68)	36.2 (31-44)	58.4		

The lizards were very common, rather abundant, on vegetation-less, absolutely bare, concentric, loose, sand dunes at Dhanana but were not so common near Mandla. They were active all through the morning, up to 11.30 a.m. and during the evening. Activity during the morning was more intense as is evidenced by the collection record. In a single day 24 lizards were collected in the morning and only three during the evening. The Toad Agama can run fairly fast. Its speed does not decrease while climbing sand dunes. It has a habit of stopping a while and looking backward towards the chaser. When danger threatens, the agamid buries itself in the loose sand by lateral wriggings or shivering movements of the body. The limbs do not participate in this activity. The buried lizard leaves a clear mark on the sand and its collection thereafter is not difficult. The lizard was found buried up to a maximum depth of 10 cm. I did not notice the dorsal curling of the tip of the tail as mentioned in *P. leuteoguttatus* (Minton 1966). The structural adaptations befitting the genus to the xeric environment, as described by Smith (1935), are also clearly visible in the present series

of lizards collected in the Rajasthan desert. All the lizards exhibited vivid coloration on the dorsal side of the body but a few do not possess the darker mid dorsal line running from the neck to the hind limb region.

The stomach contents of 15 Toad Agama showed remains of small ants, beetles, orthopterous and hymenopterous insects. The frequency of occurrence of ants was more than 50 per cent. One of the big females contained in addition remnants of a young lizard.

In the present collection of *P. euphilopus*, females outnumber males. Young specimens of various sizes (Snout vent length 22 mm to 55 mm, Tail length 12 mm to 30 mm) in the series indicate that the hatching occurred during August but surprisingly, a few females still possessed enlarged oocytes.

Eumeces taeniolatus (Blyth)

Yellow-bellied Mole Skink

Eurylepis taeniolatus Blyth, 1854. *J. Asiat. Soc.*, xxiii: 470.

1 ♀—Jodhpur, Research Farm of the Institute situated over a sandy plain with rich flora, captured in Sherman live trap.

Snout vent length 122 mm, Tail length 123 mm.

The stomach of the skink contained chitinous parts of beetles which were not identifiable. The species is distributed from southwestern Arabia to Transcaspia, and east to Kutch and Kashmir. It has also been reported from Rajasthan by Smith (1935) but he did not mention any specific locality. During the UNESCO Project it was collected at Jhunjhunu.

Ophisops jerdoni (Blyth)

Jerdon's Lizard

Ophisops jerdoni Blyth, 1853. *J. Asiat. Soc. Bengal*, xxii: 653.

1 ♀—Jalor, August, 1970.

Snout vent length 76 mm, Tail length 115 mm.

The lizard was collected from the Jalor hills, four kilometres in the southwest direction. A few more were observed but could not be captured. The lizards were not, however, common as reported in the Salt Range area (Hora & Chopra 1923). The lizards were seen on the hillock up to 9 a.m. They were not seen during the evenings. The stomach of the lizard contained mandibles of beetles.

Smith (1935) mentioned that the species is distributed in Northern and Central India, North West Frontier, Baluchistan, Punjab, Cutch and Bellary. From Rajasthan, he reported it from Jaisalmer. The present record extends its range further southeast in the State.

Varanus griseus koniecznyi Mertens

Indian Desert Monitor

Varanus griseus koniecznyi Mertens, 1954. *Aqr. Terrar. Zeitschr.*, 7 : 3-19.

1 ♂—Jodhpur, Research Farm of the Institute.

Snout vent length 285 mm, Tail length 365 mm.

The stomach of the monitor was heavily infested with nematode parasites and contained only a pebble, 15×10 mm.

Since Smith (1935) did not classify the species into subspecies, I have followed Minton's (1966) key for determining the subspecies. He mentioned that *koniecznyi* 'occurs in arid habitats from Central India westward through Sind and most of Punjab'. *V. g. caspius* occurs in deserts from Transcaspia to southern Khazakstan and southward through much of Iran and Afghanistan into northern Baluchistan. 'To the west, *caspius* intergrades with the nominate race'.

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